SPORT

Outstanding Olise lifts Bayern eight points clear

MUNICH: Michael Olise scored twice and set up three more goals as Bayern Munich came from two down to beat Freiburg 6-2 at home in the Bundesliga on Saturday.

Olise created goals for Lennart Karl, Dayot Upamecano and Nicolas Jackson, while Harry Kane also got on the scoresheet as Bayern clicked into gear, having trailed after early goals from Freiburg's Yuito Suzuki and Johan Manzambi.

Bayern's victory means they now have 31 points, with Bayer Leverkusen, 3-1 winners at VfL Wolfsburg, second on 23 after Borussia Dortmund dropped points at home to VfB Stuttgart.

With Wednesday's trip to Arsenal on his mind, Bayern coach Vincent Kompany shuffled his deck, leaving captain Joshua Kimmich on the bench and resting former Gunners forward Serge Gnabry.

The move looked to have backfired early with Suzuki and Manzambi both scoring from set-pieces to put Freiburg two up.

Bayern almost immediately launched a comeback with Karl netting a fine finish in the 21st from an Olise assist.

Olise then turned scorer, levelling with a powerful shot in first-half stoppage time.

Bayern's comeback was complete in the 55th when Olise whipped a corner to the far post for Upamecano to volley in before Kane added another — his 14th league goal this season — five minutes later.

Another Olise solo run and assist for Nicolas Jackson earned Bayern their fifth goal in the 78th before Olise curled a stunning shot into the top corner to cap his five-star performance.

Dortmund led twice but were twice pegged back in a 3-3 home draw against Stuttgart, with visiting Germany striker Deniz Undav scoring a second-half hat-trick.

An Emre Can penalty and a Maximilian Beier tap-in had Dortmund 2-0 up at half-time. Undav scored twice either side of home striker Serhou Guirassy having a goal struck off for offside.

Dortmund thought they had won when Karim Adeyemi scored on the counter in the final minute, but Undav completed his hat-trick in the first minute of stoppage time to snatch a point.

Leverkusen cruised to victory away at Wolfsburg, with Jonas Hofmann, Edmond Tapsoba and Malik Tillman scoring for the visitors.

The win took Leverkusen a point ahead of Dortmund in third place The 2024 Bundesliga champions have picked up 22 of a possible 27 points under coach Kasper Hjulmand, who came in when Erik ten Hag was sacked after just two league games.

Anton Kade scored the only goal as Augsburg beat Hamburg 1-0 at home, while Borussia Moenchengladbach deepened last-placed Heidenheim's woes with a 3-0 away win.—Agencies

Marseille wallop Nice to go top

NICE: Olympique de Marseille climbed provisionally top of Ligue 1 on Friday after walloping woeful Nice 5-1 in a one-sided local derby with fireworks on and off the pitch.

Marseille's player of the season so far Mason Greenwood scored twice while former Arsenal frontman Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Timothy Weah and Igor Paixao were all on the scoresheet.

Marseillle climbed to 28 points from 13 games while Paris St Germain have 27 with a game in hand.

Aubameyang was unmarked when he tapped home in the 11th minute. Greenwood ripped Nice open down the right and scored either side of half-time.

Greenwood has ten goals in Ligue 1 this season, one ahead of Joaquin Panichelli of Strasbourg.

The Nice players were furious with a perceived elbowing and the bench joined the melee. Near the end an astonishing firework display in the Marseille section almost saw the match abandoned.—AFP

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker reacts after Nottingham Forest's Morgan Gibbs-White scored the third goal during their Premier League match at Anfield on Saturday.—Reuters

Liverpool stunned by Forest, Chelsea boost title charge

LONDON: Troubled Liverpool's woeful season hit a new low with a shocking 3-0 home defeat against Nottingham Forest, while Chelsea won 2-0 at Burnley to step up their Premier League title challenge on Saturday.

The spluttering champions fell behind in the 33rd minute when Murillo's fierce strike punished their failure to deal with Elliot Anderson's corner.

Reds boss Arne Slot was fuming that the goal was allowed despite Forest's Dan Ndoye appearing to obstruct Liverpool keeper Alisson Becker — an offence that led Virgil van Dijk's equaliser to be disallowed in the 3-0 loss at Manchester City before the international break.

Sean Dyche's side doubled their lead after 46 minutes when Nicolo Savona slotted home from Neco Williams' cutback.

With Liverpool's defence in disarray, Morgan Gibbs-White scored Forest's third from the rebound after Omari Hutchinson's shot was saved in the 78th minute.

Beaten by Forest at Anfield for a second successive season, Liverpool have lost eight of their last 11 games in all competitions, including six of their last seven in the top-flight.

It is the first time Liverpool have lost consecutive league games by a three-goal margin since 1965.

Slot admitted on Friday that Liverpool's players are still affected by the tragic death of Diogo Jota in a crash crash in Spain in July.

And once again they were devoid of inspiration and energy in another lethargic display that left them languishing in 11th place, eight points behind leaders Arsenal.

Liverpool's stunning decline comes after a summer spending spree of over $523 million.

Alexander Isak was hauled off in the second half of his fourth league start for Liverpool following a British record move from Newcastle United that has failed to live up to the hype. Isak has yet to score for the Reds in the top-flight.

At Turf Moor, Pedro Neto's diving header put Chelsea ahead just before the interval and Enzo Fernandez netted in the closing stages.

Enzo Maresca's side climb to second place and sit three points behind leaders Arsenal, who host Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday.

The Blues have won eight of their last 10 matches in all competitions, making it a memorable 50th Premier League game in charge for Maresca.

It was the ideal warm-up for Chelsea ahead of a crucial week featuring home games against Barcelona in the Champions League on Tuesday and Arsenal in the Premier League on November 30.

West Ham United blew a two-goal lead in their 2-2 draw at Bournemouth.

Former Cherries forward Callum Wilson put West Ham in front after 12 minutes and produced another fine finish in the 35th minute.

But Marcus Tavernier's 69th minute penalty, awarded for Max Kilman's handball, sparked a Bournemouth fightback that climaxed with Enes Unal's 81st minute equaliser.

New Wolverhampton Wanderers manager Rob Edwards suffered a 2-0 debut defeat against fourth-placed Crystal Palace at Molineux.

Edwards has been tasked with saving Wolves from relegation after arriving from second tier Middlesbrough to replace the sacked Vitor Pereira.

But Edwards, who played over 100 times for Wolves, was unable to spark an immediate revival from his bottom of the table team.

Daniel Munoz gave Palace a 63rd minute lead and Yeremy Pino netted six minutes later to leave Wolves, beaten in 10 of their 12 league games, sitting nine points from safety.

Brighton & Hove Albion came from behind to defeat Brentford 2-1 at the Amex Stadium.

Brentford's Igor Thiago scored a 29th minute penalty, but Danny Welbeck bagged Brighton's 71st minute leveller and Jack Hinshelwood netted in the 84th minute. Bart Verbruggen saved Thiago's stoppage-time penalty to preserve the win.

Raul Jimenez's 84th minute goal gave Fulham a 1-0 victory against Sunderland at Craven Cottage.—AFP

Wins for Challengers, Conquerors

FAISALABAD: Challengers beat Strikers by five wickets while Conquerors downed Invincibles by 38 runs in the fifth round of the National Women's One-Day Tournament in Faisalabad on Saturday.

Challengers recorded the victory – their second in the tournament out of four games – as they chased down the 209 with 38 balls to spare at the Jawad Club Cricket Ground.

Player-of-the-match Ayesha Zafar (83) and Eyman Fatima (59 not out) struck solid half-centuries for the winners.

Earlier, the Strikers had slumped to 34-4 before centurion Aliya Riaz (101 not out) and Nashra (50 not out) joined forces to take their team out of trouble with an unbeaten 174-run stand.

Strikers now sit at the bottom of the table with one win out of four games, while Challengers are third.

In the second game of the fifth round, table toppers Conquerors successfully defended their 244-run total restricting fourth-placed Invincibles to 206 all out in 44.4 overs at the HPC Ground.

For Conquerors, the 124-run opening stand by Saira Jabeen (88), who was later named player-of-the-match, and Gull Feroza (64) laid the foundation of a fighting total.

In reply, Invincibles could not achieve the target despite fighting half-centuries from Natalia Parvaiz (66) and Muneeba Ali (51). Spinners Saima Malik (3-31) and Ayesha Bilal (3-46) were the main wicket-takers.—Agencies

India to face Nepal in blind women's T20 WC final

COLOMBO: India beat Australia on Saturday to enter the final of the first blind women's T20 world cup against Nepal, winners of the other semi-final against Pakistan in Colombo.

India won the first semi-final by nine wickets while Nepal cruised into Sunday's final at Colombo's P. Saravanamuttu Stadium after beating Pakistan by seven wickets.

Australia's Chanakan Buakhao top scored with 34 to take their total to 109-9 in their 20 overs. India's Simranjeet Kour took 1-6 having bowled two overs. Australia suffered six runouts.

Basanti Hansda top scored for India with 45 while Ganga Kadam (41) and K Karuna (16) were not out when they took India into the finals with 112-1 in 11.5 overs.

In the second match for the day, Nepal won by seven wickets after restricting Pakistan at 169-6 in their 20 overs. Nepal lost two quick wickets, but managed to coast to a comfortable victory.

Pakistan's poor bowling helped, conceding 47 extras, making it the highest score for Nepal.

Nepal's Binita Pun scored 46 off 23 balls before being ruled out hit wicket. Susma Tamang was not out on 36.

Pakistan's Shumaila Kiran with 1-10 was the best bowler while Mehreen Ali ended up with 1-45.

The final will be played on Sunday at the Saravanamuttu Stadium which is the oldest Test cricket venue in Sri Lanka.—AFP

Pakistan edge SA in Over-40s T20 WC opener

KARACHI: Pakistan began their IMC Over-40s T20 World Cup campaign with a narrow three-run win over South Africa on the opening day of the tournament here at the National Bank Stadium on Saturday.

Sent in to bat, Pakistan made 134-5. Tariq Mahmood top-scored with 45 while skipper Abdul Razzaq hit 36. South Africa's chase revolved around Werner Moolman's fighting 55 off 48 balls, but Pakistan held firm at the death. Sohail Khan claimed 3-29 and was named player-of-the-match.

At Southend Club, the United States beat Rest of Gulf by 24 runs after posting 168-5 and limiting their rivals to 144-9.

West Indies downed Canada by seven wickets at Karachi Gymkhana while the UAE defeated Hong Kong by 31 runs at the same venue.

Rest of the World defended 134-9 against Zimbabwe, who managed 80-8.

In another match played at the National Bank Stadium, Sri Lanka chased Australia's 147-7 with three wickets and an over to spare, thanks to 35 each from Marlon Fernando and Manjula Guruge.—Agencies

Pakistan rout India to reach IBSF Snooker Team World Cup final

MUSCAT: Delivering a commanding performance, Pakistan's national team defeated arch-rivals India 3-1 in the semi-final of the IBSF Snooker Team World Cup on Saturday.

The fabulous win by the Pakistan duo, comprising seasoned veterans Mohammad Asif and Asjad Iqbal, against India was followed by a dominant 3-0 victory against Qatar in the quarter-final clash earlier on Saturday.

The match began with Asjad, who recently reached the final of the individual event, facing India's Pankaj Advani in the first frame.

Advani had the better start, racing to a 30-point lead after a break of 21. He consolidated his advantage with a further break of 22 before Asjad finally got on the board.

The 34-year-old Asjad slowly chipped away as safety play ensued, but committed two fouls, eventually giving Advani the opening he needed. The Indian cueist played a clearance of 25 to close out the first frame 85-21.

Pakistan's most successful cueist, Asif, then took to the table and quickly pulled the team level with a commanding 113-23 win against Brijesh Damani.

The 43-year-old Asif was in sublime form, crafting a magnificent break of 77 on the back of 11 reds, eight black and two blue balls before missing his shot.

Damani scored 23 points from the opportunity but required snookers, which he never obtained as Asif returned to make a clearance of 32 and level the tie.

The crucial third frame saw the pairs from both teams playing together.

The Indian pair had the better start, accumulating a lead of 34 points. Undeterred, the ever-reliable Asif stepped up and turned the situation in Pakistan's favour, stitching together a break of 46 to give Pakistan a 16-point lead before missing a tricky shot with the help of the rest.

Advani tried to close the gap but could only add three points before Asjad chipped in with a break of 15 to take Pakistan's total to 65.

With snookers now required, the Indian players attempted to play around the pink ball, but after a lengthy period, Asif finally broke through, potting the ball to seal the frame 69-47.

In the fourth frame, Asif and Advani locked horns with Pakistan aiming to seal the win and India fighting for a comeback.

Asif drew first blood, scoring 11 points. Advani closed the gap to just two points on his first chance before missing his shot. The mistake proved costly as Asif punished it dearly.

The veteran Pakistani cueist crafted a decisive 61-break, all but deciding the frame. Advani returned for one more shot but acknowledged his defeat as Asif potted the next ball. The two players shook hands as a victorious Asif waved to the crowd, cementing Pakistan's place in the final.—Agencies

PFB elections held

LAHORE: The Pakistan Federation Baseball (PFB) elected its president, secretary and treasurer here on Saturday.

Dr Hamood Lakhvi, Tahir Mehmood and Syed Ali Shah were elected unopposed as president, secretary and treasurer, respectively. They replaced ex-president Shaukat Javed, secretary Syed Fakhar Ali Shah and Mohsin.

The house on the occasion hailed the services of all the former PFB officials including late Syed Khawar Shah, who was one of the pioneers of introducing baseball in Pakistan.

"The elections were held in the presence of the designated observer of the Pakistan Olympic Association, Arshad Sattar, under the supervision of the Chairman of the Election Commission, Muhammad Zubair Aziz Cheema, retired Sessions Judge, [and] members Advocate Muhammad Abdullah and Ijaz Ahmed Rana," the PBF said.—Sports Reporter

LAS VEGAS (Nevada): McLaren's Lando Norris celebrates after qualifying in pole position for the Las Vegas F1 Grand Prix on Friday. The championship leader maintained his charge towards a maiden F1 crown by grabbing his third pole position in as many races in a wet and slippery qualifying with McLaren team-mate and closest title rival Oscar Piastri only fifth. The Briton — who has surged into a 24-point lead in the drivers championship after wins in Brazil and Mexico — clocked a fastest time of 1min 47.934sec in treacherous conditions. Red Bull's reigning world champion Max Verstappen, third in the standings after 21 of 24 races and 49 points off the lead, was second fastest in 1min 48.257sec with Williams' Carlos Sainz third.—Reuters

Battling Cobolli sends holders Italy into Davis Cup final

BOLOGNA: Italy's Flavio Cobolli (C) celebrates with team-mates and captain Filippo Volandri after winning his singles match against Belgium's Zizou Bergs in the Davis Cup semi-final at the SuperTennis Arena.—Reuters

BOLOGNA: Hosts Italy closed in on a third successive Davis Cup title as Flavio Cobolli saved seven match points to beat Belgium's Zizou Bergs in a thriller and seal a 2-0 semi-final victory on Friday.

The 23-year-old Cobolli, roared on by frenzied home support inside the SuperTennis Arena, clawed his way to a 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (17/15) victory with the third-set tiebreak one of the best ever seen in the competition's rich history.

Both players produced some spellbinding tennis in a series of punishing rallies in the 32-point breaker with the aggressive ball striking of Bergs looking as though it would send the tie to the deciding doubles.

But Cobolli, who also failed to convert his first six match points, would not be denied and eventually fired down an unreturnable serve to spark wild celebrations in the stands.

"In the five years I've been captain, I've never seen anything like it," said Italy captain Filippo Volandri. "This match was incredible; in the end, it was 5 per cent tactics and 95 per cent heart."

Earlier, Matteo Berrettini powered past Raphael Collignon 6-3, 6-4 to put Italy in front. It was Berrettini's eighth successive match win in the competition after he won all six he played last year, including doubles, as Italy retained the title by beating the Netherlands in the final.

Italy will try to complete the three-peat in Sunday's final against either Germany or Spain. Should they prevail, they would become the first nation to win three successive titles since the Challenge Round was abolished after the 1971 event.

Cobolli, who was a regular in the 2023 title-winning side, is playing as Italy's number one in the absence of world number two Jannik Sinner and Lorenzo Musetti and has risen to the challenge in magnificent fashion.

After thrashing Filip Misolic on Wednesday to seal Italy's comfortable quarter-final win over Austria he was pushed much harder by the 43rd-ranked Bergs who battled back from a slow start to stretch Cobolli to the limit.

"It's really tough to say something about this match," Cobolli said. "I played for all of my team, my family, and it's one of the best days of my life."

The match took just over three hours as the 23-year-old Cobolli only broke serve once, in the first set Neither player conceded a break point in the second set, which Bergs clinched in a tie-break.

Growing increasingly aggressive, the Belgian earned three break points early in the third set and a fourth at 4-4.

But Cobolli responded each time with a supersonic first serves to clear the danger, then earned two match points in the following game.

The Belgian right-hander saved himself with two aces but then failed to convert his fifth break point at 5-5, forcing another tiebreak.

In the nail-biting tiebreak Cobolli saved seven match points before winning with a final ace.

Italy, who are on a 12-tie winning streak, are the first nation to reach three successive Davis Cup finals since Australia in 2001, although Australia lost two of those.—Agencies